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SUPPLEMENT TO "RAMANUJAN"



THE THATHACHARIS



by

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89 suggested  
OH ! PIOUS BLESSED ATHMA THOU ART

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Nallappa Jeeyappa ! undaunted protector of Adyapagam  
Unrivalled supporter of Thennacharya Sampradayam :

August personality, abundance in austerity,  
Amiable manners brought amicable friends :

Laudable qualities vested in Thee ! Lovable to a fault,  
Lucid in expression and clarity in criticism :

Lawyer sans degree — learned in religious love  
Long and short thy knowledge was a treasure ;

Authoritative spokesman of the NAMAM case repute  
of Sri Kanchee Devaraja Temple and its Elephant fame :

Pregnant with profound learning of Adyapakamiras,  
showering its benefits on aspring Astikas ;

Par excellence as Trustee of Sri Edokthakari Sannadhi,  
Fearless fighter and Veteran leader of A. Goshti ;

Adroit challenges to your astounding study,  
Ayurveda and Homeopathy Thy special hobby ;

Jeers hailed Thee for thy respect and interest  
in preserving their hoary traditions and prestige ;



Excellent in exposition, critical in approach of Geetha  
Thy unique treatise of this Celestial Veda ;

Yeoman service to Thenkalai Srivaishnavas all over  
Their cause was thy devotion and pleasure

Always cheerful unmindful of pretenders lurking,  
Smiles and sweet words and solace to worthy ;

Partisans in the rival camp may heave a sigh of relief  
but plenty are thy followers to shock their belief ;

Parted thy soul on 4th May '79 plunging us and family in grief  
It is a call from Lord Varada for Divine grace ;

Age and ailment snatched thee away  
for thy soul to have rest and pray.

Composed by ardent admirers

**P. B. ANANTHACHARI,**  
Advocate, Madras-1.

**K. A. DEVARAJAN,**  
Chartered Accountant,  
Madras-1.

ஸ்ரீரஸ்து.  
ஸ்ரீமதே ராமாநுஜாய நம: ஸ்ரீமத் வரவரமுநயே நம:

## காஞ்சீபுரம் ஜீயப்பங்கார் திருவாக்கு வெற்றி

நிகழும் ஆடி மாதத்தில் வெளிவந்த ஸ்ரீந்ருஸிம்ஹப்ரியாவிலும்  
ஸ்ரீரங்கநாத பாதுகாவிலும் கண்ட அதிவரதன் ரெபநமை யென்னும்  
அபத்தக் கட்டுரையின் முழுப் பொய்ம்மையை முதலிக்கும்  
உண்மைப் பொருள் விளக்கம்.

(சீலோ) யதாஜாதஜம்பூவராஹ ப்ரலாபாந்  
ஸுதாரோ சீரஸ்யந் யதார்த்தாவபோதம்.  
ஸமுத்பாதயந்நேஷ காஞ்சீபந்த:  
ஸதாம் பாணிபத்மேஷு நித்யம் சகாஸ்து.

யதாஜாதர் ஸாஹஸமாக வித்வானென்று விருதுபூண்டாலும் உபக்ரமமே  
யதாஜாதத்வத்தை நிலைநாட்டுகிறது. "தாது: க்ருதாவுதிதம்" என்று உபக்ரமம்.  
'க்ருதௌ' என்கிற பதத்தை க்ரந்த விபியிலோ தேவநாகரவிபியிலோ எழுதச்  
செய்து அதன் பொருளைச் சொல்லென்றால் வராஹம் வானமே நோக்கும் மேலே  
தமிழ் வாக்கியத்தில் ஆரூபது வரியில் "அனந்தஸரஸ் என்றும்" என்றுள்ளது.  
இந்த உய்மைக்கு எங்கே அந்வயம்? என்று கேட்டால் பாதாளமே நோக்கும்.  
"கரடிக்குப் பிடித்தவிடெல்லாம் மயிர்" என்னுமாபோலே தொட்ட தொட்ட  
விடமெல்லாம் அபத்த அஸம்பத்தமயமானவிது கிடக்க, பிரகிருதம், விவேகி  
களுக்கு உண்மைப் பொருளை யுணர்த்த வேண்டியது முக்கியம்.

தேவப்பெருமாள் ஸன்னிதிக்கு 'ஹஸ்திகிரி மாஹாத்மியம்' என்னும்  
புராணம் அவதரித்துள்ளது. இது ஸ்வாமி தேசிகனாலும் தமிழிலாக்கப்பட்ட  
புருப்பதால் அதிசங்கைகொள்ள இடமில்லை. ஆசார்ய ஹ்ருதயத்தில் (52ஆம்  
குர்ணியில்) "மஹாகேச நல்வேத வொலிப்போலே" என்றவிடத்து மணவாள  
மாமுனிகளின் வியாக்கியானத்தில் "ஸ்ரீவேப்பியோபி ஹி வேதேப்யஸ் ஸாம  
கோஷோ மஹாநபூத். அந்வகோஷயதத்பர்த்தம் தேந ப்ரஹ்மாண்ட மண்டப:"  
என்கிற ஹஸ்திகிரிமாஹாத்மிய சுலோகம் உபாத்தமாயுள்ளது. இஃது ஒரிடமே  
யன்று: ஸ்ரீவசனபூஷண (457) மூலத்திலும், அவ்விடத்து மணவாளமாமுனி  
களின் வியாக்கியானத்திலும், ஞானஸார (19) விவரணத்திலும் ஈகேஷத்ராணி  
மித்ராணீத்யாதி ஹஸ்திகிரிமாஹாத்மிய சுலோகம் உதாஹரிக்கப்பட்டிருப்பது



காணலாம். அசாணிபாலை வேங்கடாத்வரி யென்னும் மஹாகவி வரதாப்யுதய மென்னும் ஹஸ்திகிரிசம்பூ க்ரந்தத்தினால் புராண கதைப விளக்கிபுள்ளார்; அந்த சம்பூ க்ரந்தம் இற்றைக்கும் பாடப் பவசனங்களிலுள்ளது. அதில், கீழ் வரும் கலோகம் காண்மின்;—

“அர்ச்சாமாத்யயுகே மம த்வமக்ருதா ஹஸ்தி த்விதீயே யுகே  
ஜீவா த்வாபரகே கலௌ புஜகராட் இத்யர்ச்சகா நிச்சிதா:.  
சைத்ரே மாஸி பரம் பிதாமஹ! சதுர்தச்யாமிஹாகத்ய மம்  
ராகாயாம் ப்ரதிவத்ஸரம் பஹு தரான் வாரான் ஸமாராதய.”

இதன் கருத்தாவது—ஹே பிதாமஹ! என்று நான்முனை விளித்துத் தேவப் பெருமாள் பணிக்கும் வார்த்தை; பிரமண! எனக்கு நீ கிருதயுகத்தில் திருவாராதனம் செய்தாய்; இனி த்ரேதாயுகத்தில் கஜேந்திராழ்வானும், த்வாபரபுகத்தில் ப்ருஹஸ்பதியும், கலியுகத்தில் ஆதிசேஷனும் திருவாராதனம் செய்யப் போகிறார்கள்; நீ ஆண்டுதோறும் சித்திரை மாதத்தில் சுக்ல சதுர்தசியன்று இவ்விடம் வந்து பெளர்ணமியன்று எனக்குத் திருவாராதனம் ஸமர்ப்பித்துப் போகவேண்டும் என்று. இந்த நியமனத்தின்படி சித்திரை பருவத்தினன்று அசாதியாகத் தேவப்பெருமாள் கண்டருளும் மஹாத்ஸவத்தலை பாலாற்றில் எழுந்தருளியிருக்கையில் சிறிதுபோது திருத்திரையை வளைத்து அர்ச்சகபரிசாரகர்களை வரும் திருத்திரைக்கு வெளியேவந்து நிற்பார்கள். அந்த ஸமய விசேஷந்தான் ப்ரஹ்மாராதன காலமென்பார்கள். இது நிற்க

ஆக இவ்வளவால் தேறிற்று என்னென்னின். பிரமன் நிகழ்த்திய அயமேத வேள்வி க்ருதயுகத்திலென்றும். அன்றுமுதலாகத் தொடர்ச்சியாய் இன்றளவும் திருவாராதனம் நடந்துவருகிறதென்றும் தேறிற்று. இடையில் துருஷ்கயவநாதி களின் உபப்லவத்தினால் திருவாராதன விச்சிதம் நேர்ந்த தென்பது கிம்வதந்தி. அது மூல பேரத்திற்கா? உத்ஸவமூர்த்திக்கா? என்பது விமர்சிக்கவுரியது. பஞ்சபேரங்களுக்கும் விப்லவம் நேர்ந்துவிட்டதாக ப்ரஸ்தாவமில்லை. ஆகவே திருவாராதனத்திற்கு ஒருபோதும் லோபம் நேர்ந்ததில்லை யென்பது திண்ணம் பிரமனது அயமேத வேள்வியில் ஆவிர்ப்பவித்த திவ்ய மங்கள விக்ரஹம்— (அதாவது) க்ருதயுகத்தில் ஸைவ ஸாதித்த கிருமூர்த்தி-இப்போது கரிகிரியில் ஸைவ ஸாதிக்கும் மூல மூர்த்தியா? உத்ஸவமூர்த்தியா? இப்போது புஷ்கரிணி யிலிருந்தெழுந்து ஸைவ ஸாதிக்கும் அதிவரதப்பெருமானா? என்பது கீழ் வந்ததொடங்கி யிருங்கடலளவும் ஒவ்வொருவருடையவும் கேள்வியாகவுள்

ளது. தேவப்பெருமானுடைய திருவவதாரம் இந்த யுகத்திலன்று, முந்தின இரண்டு யுகங்களிலுமன்று; கிருதயுகத்தின் ஆதியில் என்பதை மறவாமல் நெஞ்சிற்கொண்டு விடையிறுக்கவேண்டும். யதாஜாதப் பேர்வழி எழுதியுள்ள தெல்லாம் ஸ்வயம்பி விசிதம் ஸ்வயம் கஜாநாதியாய். பெரும்புருகு முழுப்பொய். “அத்திவரதர் பெருமை” என்ற மகுடத்திற்குச் சிறிதும் பொருந்தாதவை. ஒவ்வொருவருக்கும் ஆதாரமற்றது

ஓர் ஊரில் ஒரு பயல் பொய் தவிர வேறொன்றும் பேசாமல் பெரும்புருக னென்று பெயரெடுத்திருந்தான் தாய் தந்தையருட்பட எல்லாரும் அவனை வெறுத்து “இந்தப் பொய்யை நீ விட்டு விடவேண்டும்” என்றார்கள் அதற்கு அவன் இணங்கி “அப்படியே விட்டுவிடுகிறேன். அருகில் விட்டால் மறுபடியும் பிடித்துக்கொள்ளும்; ஒரு பெருங்காட்டில் கொண்டு போய் விட்டு வருகிறேன் இரண்டு மூன்று நாளைக்கு உண்ணும்படியான உணவுகளைச் செய்து கொடு” என்று தாயிடஞ் சொல்லி வராளமான சோற்றுச்சுமை பெற்றுக்கொண்டு சென்று சமீபத்திலேயே ஒருநில் இரண்டு நாள் தூங்கிவிட்டு மறுநாள் சோறில்லாமல் ஊர்வந்து சேர்ந்து “மூன்று காதங்களுக்கப்பால் ஒரு பெருங்காட்டில் பொய்யை யும் புளுகையும் விட்டுவிட்டேன்; திருப்புகையில் ஒரு புலி தொடர்ந்து வந்தது; நான் அஞ்சியோடி ஒரு மரத்தின் மீது ஏறிக் கொண்டேன் புலி லிடாமல் மரத் தண்டைவந்து மேலே ஏறமுடியாமல் மரத்தடியிலேயேகிடந்தது; நானே மரத்தின் மேலேயிருந்தேன் லகுசங்கை நேர்த்தபடியால் மரத்திலிருந்துகொண்டே சிறுநீர் பெய்தேன்; புலி அந்தச் சிறுநீர்த்தாரையைக் கயிறாகப்பற்றிக் கொண்டு மேலேயேற ஆரம்பித்தது நான் சிறுநீர்த்தாரையை அடக்கிவிடவே புலி தொப் பென்று கீழே விழுந்து மாண்டது நான் பயம் தீர்ந்து கீழே குதித்து ஓடிவந்து விட்டேன்” என்றான் இந்த யதாஜாதன் அவனுக்கு ஸஹோதரனை போலும். இந் தக்கதைக்கும் மேற்பட்ட பொய்யுரைகளை நிரம்பக் கொண்டதே இரண்டு பதிரிகையிலும் வெளிவந்திருப்பது.

ஸ்வாமி தேசிகன் “பத்மயோகேஸ் துரக ஸவநவேத்யாம் ச்யாமளோ ஹவ்யவாஹ.” என்றும் ஹைரண்யகர்ப்பஹயமேதஹவிர்ப்பஜம் த்வாம்” என்றும். “ப்ருகமதபங்க விசேஷ நீலமங்கம்” என்றும் ஸாதித்தருளி அநுபவித்த திருமேனி எது? என்பதை சீரணயிக்கப் பிரமாணமில்லை என்றே பிராமாணிகர் களான பெரியார்கள் பகர்க்குறனர் சுவத்தைச் சுடோட்டுக்குக் கொண்டு போவது போல் முன்னே நெருப்புச் சட்டியும் பின்னாலே பலாக்கணப்பாட்டுகளும். இடையிலே விக்ரஹம் அமைந்த பாடையுமாக ஒரு பாக்கு நடந்ததாகவெழுதி இக்கதையில் வந்தவாசியையும் எவல்பாக்கத்தையும் அம்மணம் பாக்கத்தையும். ஸம்பந்தலவலே



சமுமற்ற தாதாசாரியர்களையும் பிணைப்பது ஸ்வாமி தேசிகன் தத்வமுத்தாகலாப ஸர்வார்த்த ஸித்தியில் "மரிகாமப்பளி ஸ்ராத: கபுஷ்ப க்ருத சேகர: ஏஷ வந்த்யாஸுதோ யாதி சசச்ருங்கதநுர்தா" என்றொரு சுலோகம் ஸாதிக்கிறாரே அதற்குமிதற்கும் வாசிக்கிற துயில்லை அத்திவரதர்கதையில் தாதாசாரியர்களின் ப்ரஸ்தாவத்திற்கு ப்ரஸக்தி லேசமுமில்லை. ஸ்ரீ காஞ்சிபுரம் ஸ்வாமி சிலபல வாண்டுகட்குமுன் வெளியிட்டுள்ள தாததேசிகன் ஈடுபாடு, வாதன் ஸன்னிதி வரலாறு. (ஸமீப காலத்தில் வெளியிட்டிருக்கின்ற) தேவப்பெருமான் திருவருள் முதலான தமிழ் நூல்களில் காணும் தாதாசார்ய வைபவங்களை ஸ்ரீயதோக்தகாரி ஸன்னிதி தர்மகர்த்தாவான (வைதந்நடவாஸி) நல்லப்பா ஜீயப்பங்கார் ஸ்வாமி ஆங்கிலமறிந்தமஹான்களுக்கு எளிதாக்கப்பரியும் படியெழுதிய "தாதாசாரிஸ்" என்கிற இவ்வாங்கில புத்தகம் தேவராஜஸ்வாமி தேவஸ்தான சத்துவமுணர் விரும்புமவர்களுக்கு மஹோபகாரகமாகும்

ஸ்ரீமத்பரமஹம்ஸ ஆத்தான் ஜீயர் ஸ்வாமியின் ப்ரஸ்தாவ விசேஷமில்லா மல் ஸ்ரீ தேவராஜஸ்வாமியைப் பற்றி எழுதப்படும் கட்டுரையானது குப்பையில் எறியத்தக்கது. மற்ற திவ்வியதேசத்தெம்பெருமான்களின் கதை எப்படியிருந்தாலும் தேவப்பெருமானுடைய கதை க்ருதயுகத்திலிருந்து தொடர்ந்து வருவதாகப் ப்ரபலப்ரமாண ஸித்தமாய் விட்டபடியால் இந்த யதாஜாதஸதர்மாக்கள் கைவைக்கவும் வாய்க்கைவுந் தில் மல்லாத விஷயம்து. திருவல்லிக்கேணியில் வாழும் மஹாமேதாவியும் ஆராய்ச்சி வல்லுநரான ஸ்ரீமான் K. V. ராமன் M. A. Ph. D. விமர்ச விசாரதராகையால் இதில் அவருடைய விமர்சங்களை உலகம் எதிர்பார்த்திருக்கும்.

ஆதியில் அத்திவரதர் புஷ்கரிணியில் சேர்ந்ததைப்பற்றி மூவகைக்காரணங் கள் பெரியோர் கூறுவர். (1) திருமேனியில் தாபம் திருவதற்கு (2) துருஷ்கயவநாதி களின் உபல்லவத்திற்கு அஞ்சி (3) ஒரு திருக்கையில் லோபம் ஏற்பட்ட படியால் என்று. உண்மையைப் பேரருளாளனே உணருவர்.

முடிவுரை: — "தாதாசாரிஸ்" என்கிற இந்த ஆங்கில நூல் யதாஜாதஸு டைய அபத்தக்கட்டுரைக்கு மறுப்பாகத் தோன்றியதன்று ஓராண்டுக்கு முன்பு எழுதப்பட்டு நான்கு மாதங்களுக்கு முன்பு அச்சிடப்பெற்றது. இதவும், இதற்கு மூலமாகமேவே தெரிவிக்கப்பட்ட தமிழ் நூல்களும் திருவல்லிக்கேணி ஸன்னிதி யிலுள்ள புத்தகக்கடையில் கிடைக்கும். இங்ஙனம்.

**T. V. சக்கரவர்த்தி,**  
திருவல்லிக்கேணி. 2-8-79.

## SUPPLEMENT TO "RAMANUJAN"

by

NALLAPPA JEEYAPPANGAR, B. A.

### Section 3

#### THE THATHACHARIS

We are not concerned, here, with the pedigree of the Thathacharis whether or not they descended straight from Peria Tirumalai Nambi, or Nathamunigal or Nammalwar himself direct. Nor should it matter for us whether they originally belonged to Ettur or Immadi in Andhra Pradesh or Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu. We can also allow full scope for their tall and fantastic claim on behalf of their original ancestor, Kotikanyakadanam Thathachariyar in respect of the major constructions of all the great south Indian Temples and the gold gilding of all their Vimanams (domes) in competition with the great Vijayanagar Emperors like Krishna Devaraya, Atchuta Devaraya and Sadasiva Devaraya. (Please see our article, regarding this claim, published, in "Sri Ramanuja." No. 317)

Even so, we can bear absolutely no grudge against the boasts (of the author of the booklet under review) in respect of the Thathachariar's occupying a pride of place in society, while emphasizing at the same time, that a high status necessarily involves an equally heavy responsibility of setting high ethical standards in society, in the absence of which, one should forfeit any claim thereto. With this preamble, let us examine the conduct of the Thathacharis in their relationship with the Sri Varadarajaswami temple, as we are concerned with this aspect alone here.

We have already seen that, from the time they established their connection with this temple (in April 1711) under the Attan Jiyar Agreement, to almost the middle of the 19th Century, they strictly adhered to and helped continue the ancient usages of the temple as clearly brought out by the deed, both in respect of the internal mode of worship and the external apperance, in accordance thereof, as evidenced by the Tenkalai marks or Namams, stonecut or otherwise displayed in all prominent places and on all idols or images and vahanams (vehicles) or other paraphernalia of the temple. In 1823 when an attempt was made by a few local Vadakalais, to disturb this general character by introducing Vadagalai Namams in a few places, it was the leader of the Thathacharis themselves then by name Kumara Thathachariyar who helped the temple superintendent (under appointment by government) to ward off the trouble. (Vide list of Namams taken by Narahari Rayer, temple superintendent dated 17-1-1823 signed by Kumara Thathachariar (Exhibit A1 in the recent Elephant case)



which shows all the Namams of the temple without a single exception, as Tenkalai). It should be mentioned that it was this same Kumara Thathachariar, who, along with another colleague by name Sundara Varada Thathachariar, gave an undertaking, on 19-2-1809, to the Collector, Mr. CAZIRET, that he would keep up the mamool as per the Attan Jiyar Agreement and never allow the Vadakalai Thaniyan Ramanuja Dayapathram, which was sought to be introduced in the temple by a few Vadakalias as a rival to the Tenkalai Thaniyan of Sreesailesa Dayapathram (Vide Exhibit "G" in O.S. 10 of 1906 Dist. Court Chingleput.)

In 1842, when the Government (The East India Company) divested itself of the management of temples, the trusteeship of this temple was entrusted to the same Kumara Thathachariar referred to above, with a stipulation that the time-honoured usages of the temple should be strictly followed. The Thathachari took charge of the temple in November 1842 but died in March 1843. He was succeeded by his son Sudarsana Thathachariar who easily fell a victim to the machinations of a few fanatic Vadakalais of the locality and started an era of terror and torture against the Thenkalais, which has no parallel in history. The attack against the Thenkalais and the attempt at conversion of the temple to Vadakalai character was on all fronts and in all corners. As the Thenkalais had to fight tooth and nail to preserve the ancient pristine character of the temple in all respects, the litigations that resulted therefor and therefrom, both in the criminal and civil courts have gone into many bulky volumes of printed matter, as almost all of them have gone up as second appeals into the portals of the High Court and even up, into the portals of the Privy Council, Vide, for instance, 2 Madras-62 (P.C.); 5 Madras (313); 16 M. L. J. (150); 1915 M. W. N. (281); 1939-1-(124); 23 M. L. J. (134); and the recent 1977-II-MLJ (247) etc. etc. These litigations have not only cost the temple many lakhs of rupees, but also have led to the ruin of many ancient noble families on either side. As it will take volumes to describe the nature of these cases, a few important features brought out in them will alone be dealt with here.

#### DARING FABRICATIONS

It should be mentioned here, that, while a few leaders among the Thathacharis kept up the pledge given by Thirumalai Thathachariar in 1711 and again the undertaking given to Government by Kumara Thathachariar to preserve Mamool, a few others among them who came to dominate in later years, were working underground or behind the back of Tenkalais to create certain important rights and interests for themselves in the temple, more than what was warranted by the Attan Jiyar Agreement, or even diametrically against the letter and spirit of it. The faked Attan Jiyar agreement, which cut a sorry

figure in the court has been already dealt with in the section on Attan Jiyar (vide Page 12 ante). It was thus that a deed known as Swatantra Dittam of Accounts was concocted, with the help of the temple Karnams, by which they tried to usurp certain rights, the most important of which was the recital of Tamil Prabandams (known as Adyapakam Miras) which carried rich honours and emoluments with it. (Vide page 214 in the printed papers in O.S. 10 of 1906 Dt. Court, Chingleput) Even though this document was declared as a forgery, on the move of a Tenkalai mirasdar of the temple by name Prativadi Bhayankaram Sri Rangachariar as early as in 1820 in O.S. No. 377 of 1819 and the Karnam who helped at concocting it convicted (Vide Page 130 of the printed papers in A.S. 51 of 1904 (H C)), it is this document which the Thathacharis have used, again and again, as their sheet-anchor or the thin end of their wedge to expand their rights, even though it met with the same fate as the faked Attan Jiyar Agreement in many later cases.

Another dexterously manoeuvred document is what is called the Stotrapatam Mamool Nama. It has come about thus: on a certain festival occasion, in 1825, an ordinary Vadagalai, that is a Vadagalai who is not a Thathachari, has uttered one sloka or Sanskrit Verse more than what the Thathacharis have recited (Vide page 49 in the printed papers of A. S. 51 of 1904. H. C.). This is a very grave offence against the well established right of the Thathacharis!!! At once a complaint goes to the Collector, who enquires (All these through correspondence only) as to what the Mamool (usage) in this respect is, and who the rightful Mirasdars are for reciting the stotras in the temple. Immediately, a long list of Sanskrit recitations (covering almost all important and festival occasions on which they are to be recited) goes to the collector, as if it is a copy of a list already prepared (with the approval of all parties!) and kept in the temple as early as in 1823! and with a special note that the Thathacharis only are the rightful reciters therefor and neither the ordinary Vadakalais nor the Thenkalais had any right thereto. The ordinary Vadagalai who transgressed against mamool by reciting *one sloka more*, is fined *one rupee*. for this very great and grave offence! Thus a record has come to be created and kept in the Collector's office and a certified copy of the same is used at a later time to establish their Sthotrapatam miras (for instance in O. S. 24 of 1902, Dt. Court Chingleput). The court, naturally, views this list with suspicion, as it clashes with other authentic and well established records(1) and bases its decision on other independent and disinterested evidence (Vide grounds of appeal in A. S. 51 of 1904, H. C.). It should be mentioned here that the Stothrapatam chant was sought to be pressed into service by the Thathacharis in opposition to as a competitive service to the time-and



honoured Tamil Divyaprabandam recitation of the Tenkalais as one of their methods of converting the temple and the mode of worship and the performance of festivals therein from Thenkalai to Vadagalai character. (Vide for instance Exhibits C. C of O. S. 10 of 1906 Dt. Court Chingleput at page 63 the printed paper of the case.)

### DARING CONCOCTIONS RE: REGARDING NAMAMS

The Thathacharis filed as exhibit ii in O. S. Nos 6 and 7 of 1912, P. D. M. Court Chingleput, a certified copy of a Mamool Nama alleged to have been given by the Sthalathars of the temple as early as on 26-9-1829, in respect of the Namams of the temple, as if all of them, without a single exception, were Vadakalai only at that time!! But as this so called Mamool Namah of Namams was diametrically opposed to the authentic list prepared by Narahari Rayer, the temple superintendent on 17-1-1823 (Ex. A-1 in recent elephant case) in the presence of the sthalathars including Kumara Thathachariar who has signed it, and again to the list of stone-cut Namams prepared by Ramaswamy Maistry, the Huzar Superintendent on 3rd. August 1827, (Ex. A-2 in the recent elephant case) which was immediately verified to be true by the then collector, Mr. Henry Vivash by his personal inspection (Vide Para 10 in 1977-ii MLJ 247) and again the list prepared by Court Amin Kasiram dated 15-9-1850, and the report of Four Amins on 28-10-1852 (Ex. A-3 in the elephant case) during the pendency of O. S. Nos. 14 and 15 of 1850, and all these verified to be true again by the personal inspection of the Civil Judge, Mr. Dowdeswell twice in 1856, and again as this Mamool Namah was not produced in the early Namam suits of 1850, the Court had no difficulty in rejecting this daring and down right concoction as unworthy of acceptance. There is another similar fabricated document dated 30-4-1839 to their credit in respect of the Namams (Vide page 189 of the printed papers in the 5 Mad. case), which met with the same fate.

### THE TWO HUNDRED YEARS WAR REGARDING ADHYAPAKAM SERVICE

(a) *The Antiquity of the Service*: Whatever the character of the Vishnu temples might have been in their early stages, according to Sri Vaishnavism, they have become truly holy and popular only after they have been sung by certain divinely gifted Dravidian poet-saints known as Alwars. The Alwars are known, in Vaishnavite parlance, as Divya-soories. (Divine seers); their

inspired out-pourings, in Tamil, on the glories of the Almighty are known as Divya Prabandams (Divine songs) and it is only the temples sung by them that have come down to us as Divya Desams (divine spots or temples). Thus, according to Sree Vaishnavism, Divya soories (divine seers), Divya Prabandams (divine songs) and Divya Desams (divine temples, are closely and inseparably knit together, so that one cannot exist or be thought of without the others. Even though, according to tradition, it was Sreeman Natha Munigal (9th century A. D.) the first and earliest of Sri Vaisnavite Acharyas, who unearthed the Divya Prabandams at a time when they were long forgotten and laid the foundation for their use in certain South Indian Vishnu temples, all the guruparampara prabavams are eloquent on the fact that it was Ramanuja (1017-1137) who was mainly responsible for the installation of the idols of all Alwars in temples (in spite of the fact they belonged to all castes) and the chanting of their Tamil Divya Prabandams as part and parcel of ceremonial worship therein, and also for the performance of pujas and festivals for these Alwars themselves, on a par with those of the chief Deities, in a grand scale. This was one of the most liberal democratic and popular reforms introduced by Ramanuja in the matter of temple worship. That the temples have become popular and grand only on account of the Alwars' songs being ingrained in them as part and parcel of ceremonial worship is voiced forth by the great Tamil poet-Kambar, as early as in the 12th century A. D. in his famous poem entitled Satakopar Andathi thus:

அந்தமிலா மறையாயிரத்து ஆழ்ந்த அரும்பொருளை  
செய்தமிழாகத் திருத்திலனேல், நிலத்தேவர்களும்  
தம் தம் விழாவும் அழகும் என்னாகும்? தமிழார் கவியின்  
பந்தம் விழா ஒழுகும் குருகூர்வந்தபண்ணவனே

(Had not the divine saint of Kurukur (St. Satakopa or Nammalwar) brought out all the rare truths, hidden deep in the thousand odd eternal Vedas, into chaste and sweet Tamil, where will the Brahmins, their temples, their feasts and festivals and their beauties stand? They would be nowhere.)

In the booklet under review, the authors state (at page 39) "*In Vaishnavite temples the only mode of worship permitted and practiced (?) is according to the Agamas either Pancharatra Agama or Vaikhanasa Agama,*" thus ignoring the great reform introduced by Ramanuja.

We are almost tempted to ask them, "Why stick to Agamas alone which, according to yourselves, have supplanted the Vedic modes? Why can't you



revert to the Vedic, why, even earlier Neolithic and Palaeolithic Animism!!! The authors cannot shut their eyes to the fact that Religion as any other sphere of life is subject to the laws of evolution, survival and progress compelled by the necessities of the march of time. In fact, the very idol or Archavathara or temple worship should be repugnant to these authors and they have clearly let themselves out in true colours when they say (at page 17) that *Ramanuja does not enjoin us to frequent the temples!* Did *Ramanuja* effect so much of reforms as the Koilozhugus (early histories) of Sree Rangam and Tirumalai eloquently speak of and which are followed up-to-date as *Ramanuja's* mandates (ராமானுஜர் தீவ்யாக்ஞையாவர்த்ததாம் அபிவர்த்ததாம்) in order to goad his followers to turn their backs on them and march back to Methuselah or the jungle cult of the stone age? And again, did Vedanta Desika, with all his zeal for the Vedas, and the Sri Bhasya, pretend when he expressed *Vaikunta vasepi Na mebilashah*. (I do not prefer even a life of eternal bliss in heaven to my close living with Sri Varada Raja of Kanchi)! There should be a limit to the length of even one's fanaticism!

(B) *The Origin of the Schism*: It need not be said that the Thenkalais are the true followers of the Alwar Cult, as the name itself implies and as such the zealous guardians of the cult as ingrained by Ramanuja in temples. But there was a section among the Vaishnavite Brahmins themselves, the forefathers of the present authors of this booklet and their like, who could not see eye to eye with the radical reforms introduced by Ramanuja in temples, the chief reason being that the Alwars belonged to all castes and their songs were in pure Tamil. So the Brahmins who belonged to this section, who may be termed as 'reactionaries', kept themselves away from temples, which became desecrated according to them, on account of the introduction of the Tamilian Alwar cult in them. These "Strictly Orthodox" or centrepiece Brahmins as they called themselves were particularly mindful in observing all the Vedic rites (daily, weekly, fortnightly, monthly, halfyearly, etc, etc, according to the very letter of the Sastras, before the holy fire lit at home or in the river or tank beds, as per the rules of Varnashrama (Caste and station in life), their only choice language in all these being Sanskrit. These people, laterly, came to be known as Vadagalais, or the followers of the Northern cult (It should be emphasised here that the Tenkalai Brahmins also even though they were staunch followers of the Alwar cult, never left the minimum rites enjoined by the Sastras and they were observing these in Sanskrit only at the same time revering and giving a foremost place to the chanting of the Tamil Divya-Prabandams on all occasions, auspicious or inauspicious in their homes as well, as the Attan Jiyar Agreement, will boldly bear out.)

The bent of the Vadagalais wholly towards the vedic rites, their partiality for Sanskrit and their revolt against Tamil and the Tamilian Alwars are borne out by the following irrefutable evidence:

1) Towards the middle of the 17th century, there lived a great poet by name Arasanipalai Venkatadri Swami. He was a vadagal Brahmin. One of his "Visvaguna Dharsam" is popular among Sanskrit scholars - In this work he condemn the Tenkalais, in unmistakable, as persons who have neglected the Vedas and many of the vedic rites like the daily "Vaisvadevam" and are more attached to Alwars and their Tamil Prabandams. etc., He but voices forth the general view of the vadagalais in this respect as it prevailed in his time (Vide "Ramanuja Dayapathra charithram (1954) by Mahavidwan P.B.A Swami of Kanchi)

2. In the "Manual of Chingleput District" compiled by Mr. C.S. Crole) of the Madras Civil Service and published in 1879 (for the guidance of I. C. S. Officers), the following lines can be seen (at page 33 para 3) "The Vadagalais, are more straight laced in doctrine and place more reliance on forms and ritual than the Thenkalais—Vadagalais will not read sacred books or chant except in Sanskrit, while the Thenkalais although revering that language use their own Vernacular also" This passage exactly reflects the true character of the two sects as C. S. Crole saw it before his eyes in his time.

3. Sri V. V. Srinivasa Iyengar, a late judge of the Madras High Court and a well known Vadagalai scholar has published an article in the "Swades Mitran" (a Tamil daily) dated 22.7.1931. In this, he has deplored that the Vadagalais in general had been all along neglecting the study of the Alwar's Tamil Divya Prabandams and advises them to take them from then on at least. This but mirrors the general attitude of the Vadagalais even in Sri V. V. S's time.

4. In 1947.1 M.L.J. (159) Their Lordships of the Privy Council have clearly observed, not without reason in the light of what has been stated above that the Vadagalais held the Tamil Prabandams of the Alwars as entitled to less reverence.

5. Even as late as in 1945, Sri R. Varada Thathachariar trustee of this temple for 25 years (1935 to 1960) has filed a written statement along with another trustee by name Tirumalai Thathachari, in D. S. No. 7 of 1945 Dt. Court, Chingleput, that the Tamil Prabandams of Alwars are mainly intended only for Non-Brahmins and females and as such his forefathers were not mind-



ful of them. Quoting this, a subordinate Judge of Chingleput (Mr. Shamsuddin) has found (in O.S. No. 30 of 1956) that the contempt of Vadakalais for Tamil Prabhandams is a fact which has obtained up-to-date and as such their claims for reciting Tamil in the temple cannot be bonafide (Vide para 20 of the judgement). The High Court has unhesitatingly ratified this objection in A.S. No. 283 of 1963. Thus, the prejudice of the Vadakalais, in general, against Alwars and their Tamil Prabhandams has become a pretty well legally established fact also.

In this connection, it is important to note that even the present authors of this booklet, while shedding crocodile tears for the Tamil Prabhandams (at page 20) with the words, "The fact remains that the Vadagalais have never neglected the Prabhandam," have but confirmed Mr. C. S. Crole's observation cited above almost literally saying (at page 40), "If the mode of worship employed is partially in Tamil and partially in Sanskrit as prescribed by Manavala Mamunigal we may say it is Thenkalai in character. On the other hand, if in private houses strictly Sanskrit is employed we may say it is Vadagalai in character". They have, here, clearly let the cat out in spite of themselves! and have disowned even Vedanta Desika who would swear anything by Tamil.

It is against such a back ground that we will have to consider the two hundred years war in respect of the Adyapakam service in this temple, which is raging with more or less severity and in one form or other, by way of "NEVER ENDING litigations" (to use a phrase of the High Court in the judgement in the recent L.P.A. 45 of 1974). From the moment the Thathacharis established themselves strongly and firmly as trustees of the temple they have used their utmost power and prestige to usurp the Adyapakam service from the hands of Thenkalais, obviously with a view to ultimately do away with it in the temple or to supplant it by sanskrit recitations or by the so-called Desika Prabhandams most of which were definitely coined long after the time of Vedantha Desika for the purpose of temple dispute alone. (We will clarify this by and by.)

The attempt of the Thathacharis to usurp the Adyapakam service from the Thenkalais in the early years of the last century by what is known as the Swathantra Dhittam, which has been declared as a forgery, as early as in 1820, has been already mentioned. As a matter of fact, the leader of the Thathacharis themselves by name Thandri Kumara Thathachariar has clearly acknowledged in an agreement dated 10.3.1825 executed in favour of the

Thenkalai Mirasdars of the temple that the entire service belonged exclusively to the Thenkalais alone and as such no Vadagalai could lay any claim thereto (Vide Exhibit J in O.S. 10 of '06, Dist Court, Chingleput).

Yet it is very strange that one of his own sons figured as a plaintiff in O.S. No. 231 of 1828, which was a suit filed by some Thathacharis claiming the Adyapakam right as their own and that the Thenkalais had been, till then, only their Gumastas or servants! It is stranger still that this first suit ended in full success to the Thathacharis (in the trial court) in spite of the fact that Thandri Kumara Thathachariar's agreement of 10.3.1825 boldly figured as an Exhibit in the case! But the judgement of the trial court called them as sudder Amin Pandits court, was immediately reversed in its entirety by the Acting Registrar in A.S. No. 135 of 1829 for obvious reasons. The Thathacharis "left no stone unturned" (to use a phrase from the judgement of the 5 Mad. (313) case) to gain their end by preferring a number of appeals thereon to all the superior courts which were in the formative stages then, but all in vain.

An important fact about the conduct of the Thathacharis calls for special mention here. It is one of their ways to introduce an innovation or to attempt to usurp a right belonging to others, when the wind blows in their favour, that is, when they can easily prevail upon or win over the immediate officers concerned and score their first victory, in spite of Himalayan adverse evidence but alas! only to lose their game immediately and ultimately too! In the present instance, it can be seen that the Sudder Amin Pandit, by name P. Subramaniya Sastri who decided O.S. 231 of 1828 in their favour was the very person who had figured as the wakil of the Thathacharis in civil No. 4134 of 1811, already referred to at the above para which declared that it is only the Thaniyan of Sri Sailesadaya patram in honour of Manavala Mamunigal that should prevail in all pujas and festivals in the Avatharasthala shrine of Vedanta Desika as per the established usage of the shrine and not its new rival Ramanuja dayapatram. The same tactics of the Thathacharis, that is to start an innovation or to stop an ancient usage in the temple when the wind blew in their favour can also be seen in many of the later litigations of the temple.

Coming to the Adyapakam matter, after it had been pretty well settled that the right for the entire service belonged exclusively to the Tenkalais only (in 5 Mad. 313), the Thathacharis, as trustees, tried their utmost to restrict the service in the temple in all conceivable ways and to pin it to a particular time or place or manner or condition, etc. and by withholding the usual emoluments due from the temple therefor and thereby driving the Tenkalais



again and again to courts both civil and criminal and dragging them on and on to the highest appellate court even in very petty and silly matters and most often for the very reliefs already granted once, twice, thrice in courts. harping at an ambiguous word in the judgement here and building on an *obiter observation* there. As it will take volumes to describe the full nature of these suits which have been raging for two centuries we would refer our readers to 2 Mad 62 (p. c.); 5 Mad (313); 1915 M.W.N. 281; 1939.1 M.L.J (124); 83 L.W. 407, all of which are in respect of the Adyapakam matter alone and in none of which the Thathacharis succeeded. It should be mentioned that in the early litigations the dispute was only between the Thathacharis and Tenkalais. It is only in the later litigation, the ordinary Vadagalais also figured as parties.

#### *A Judicial Verdict About their Conduct:*

In 1915 M.W.N. (281), it was clearly decided, and the matter was finally settled that the Adyapakam Miras belonged exclusively to the Tenkalais and that they are entitled to perform their service on all occasions of pujas and festivals inside and outside the temple and that such of the Vadakalais who had a bonafide liking for the Divyaprabandams can only join the service of the Mirasdars as mere ordinary worshippers but without in any way interfering with the official service and of course following their lead in every respects. The Vadagalais were also strictly prohibited, by means of a perpetual injunction, from reciting anything Tamil independent of Tenkalais, or from introducing their own mantram or Thaniyan (Ramanujadayapatram) or their own Prabandams (the so called Desika Prabandam) in any part or at any time in the temple or in the temple ceremonies or services, festivals or procession as their Lordships, Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sankaran Nair and Hon'ble Mr. Justice Oldfield, who decided the case, were sure that any leniency shown in this respect would surely be exploited by the Vadakalais to the maximum. But the Thathachari trustees and their Vadakalai supporters were bent upon pursuing the matter still further and applied for leave to appeal, on the main plea that this judgement ran counter to the law of general interest, (viz.), the right of a person to worship in a temple according to his own faith! Their petition was heard and disposed of by their Lordships Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sadasiva Iyer and Hon'ble M. Justice Napier. While dismissing this petition Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sadasiva Iyer of course with the concurrence of the colleague, has observed thus: "It is only the claim of this faction among the Vadakalais to introduce innovations into the customary practices during the regular official worship—and their attempt to create disturbance to the public peace that have been properly, if I may say so, restrained by the judgement in

1915 M.W.N. 281). It seems to me, herefore, that no question of law of interest is involved, but only question whether the courts should encourage the *never sleeping ingenuity* of a certain temple faction which is continually inventing fresh sources of criminal and civil litigations and new ingenious ways of interference with the exercise of temple office rights and discharge of temple office duties vested in the mirasi temple office holders who belong to the rival Tenkalai sect (1915 M.W.N. page 916 at page 920). In another later judgement, the Principal subordinate judge of Chingleput has observed (in O.S. No. 30 of 1956) "The history of litigation shows that when one controversy is solved by a judicial decision another controversy rises, as a *Sphinx* from its *ashes* to keep the flame of eternal disputation" (para 20 of the judgement). As to which sect that is responsible for such a deplorable state, Hon'ble Mr. Justice Palaniswamy has clearly stated, while dismissing the appeal thereon, thus: "The attitude of the Vadakalais in putting forward some innovation or other from time to time has been responsible for the series of litigation pertaining to this temple going on for the last two centuries." (Vide 83. W.L. 407, para 36). After referring to these remarks in the recent elephant case judgement (L.P.A. 45/74), Hon'ble Mr. P.S. Kailasam, the Chief Justice and Hon'ble Mr. Justice Balasubramaniam have deplored the continued adamant attitude of the Thathacharis thus: "We fully agree with the view, expressed by the learned judges in both these decisions. It is unfortunate that even though the remarks were made over sixty years ago, the Honorary trustees (Thathacharis) do not seem to have realised their responsibilities, what can we say over and above such continued verdict of the highest tribunal of the state about the conduct of the Thathacharis in this two hundred years war. Enough unto the day for the present, as we have many more scenes to reveal in the drama of Thathacharis played in this temple.

#### THE THATHACHARIS AND THE ALWARS

The Alwars are the pillars of Sri Vaishnavism and the chanting of their inspired songs the very life breadth of the Vaishnavite temples. We have already cited Kambar to show that the Vaishnavite temples would have been nowhere but for the Alwars and their divine outpourings. It is the Alwars who have brought out the very rationale of Archavatara in temples, viz the easy accessibility of the Almighty to all, the high and low, the learned and the lay alike, through them. It is why a primary importance is given to the chanting of Divyaprabandams in temples, according to the mandate of Ramanuja, so that no pooja or festival, major or minor can get on without them. It is such a popular reform as this introduced by Ramanuja that has evoked the rich patronage of kings, ministers and nobles so as to donate



liberally to Vishnu temples and for the fostering of the Alwar cult in them. There is plenty of epigraphical evidence too to bear witness to this fact. It is important to note that in the Vishnu temples of South India there is a special festival for the chanting of Divyaprabandam alone, known as Adhyayana Uthavam which is celebrated for twentyone days in all major temples, during which period the chanting of all the four thousand odd songs takes place, with the idols of the Alwars and Acharyas assembled together in a big hall before the Chief Deity. (There are a few inscriptions which speak of special donations for this festival alone). In glaring proof of the fact that it is Ramanuja who enjoined such a rule as this, it is the conclusion of the chant of Divyaprabandams and not at the furnishing stage of any other service, on all occasions, in temples or houses, that all Sri Vaishnavites, including the modern Vadagalais cry out at the top of their voices "*Ramanujarya Divyagnya Vardatam Abi Vardatam*" (we followed the holy mandate of Ramanuja only, in this respect, with zeal and greater zeal). The inclusion of such a solemn affirmation at the closing stage of the chant of Tamil Divyaprabandams must have a topical significance and meant as a direct hit or lesson to the 'reactionaries' there against whoever they may be! Prof. Dasgupta, in his monumental History of Indian Philosophy would call Ramanuja's religion itself as the very cult of the Alwars.

No temple would furnish a better example for the fostering of the Alwar cult than Sri Varada Rajaswami Devasthanam of Kanchipuram. The location of the Alwars shrines in the spacious fourth prakaram which is popularly known as the Alwar Veedhi (Alwar Street), the assignment of select places for them according to the special importance of each Alwar (protocol), the regular day to day chant of the holy hymns during both morning and evening pooja so as to cover all the four thousand odd songs many times round in a year, the complete recital of all the four thousand songs during the ten day annual birth day festival of every Alwar and Acharya enshrined in the temple, and above all the Divya Prabanda Goshti the assembly of the sacred Tamil chanters, marching in regular rows in front of the Deity during processions inside or Outside the temple, all these in full swing before the Thathacharis came to power as trustees, should have contributed not a little to the level of all India importance. It is such an usage as this that Tirumalai Thathacharyar undertook to protect and help to continue, though the Attan Jiyar Agreement in 1711, and again Kumara Thathacharyar vouch safed to the Government to keep up to 1842.

But as soon as the 'reactionary' Thathacharis gained power as trustees of the temple, all the festivals of the Alwars were stopped forthwith. Their shrines were closed and allowed to fall into disrepair and dilapidate with the growth of prickly shrubs in them and big trees on them. On the plea of dangerous condition of these shrines, for which they themselves were responsible, the idols were removed and dumped in one place, a convenient place wherein the Thathacharis could easily carry out their nefarious act of conversation of their marks from Thenkalai to Vadakalai character in spite of fact that the trustees were fully aware of the existence of early authentic Namam lists and reports of Government Officials which were filed in the early Namam suits of the temple. The celebration of the grand Adhyayana festival, *Sine Quo Non* for every Vaishnavite temple, was completely stopped. The same was the case with the monthly and annual birth day festival of the Alwars.

#### THE THATHACHARIS AND MANAVALAMAMUNIGAL : AND DOUBLE TRAGEDY—

The worst attack, however, which the Thathacharis made in the temple was against the principal Tenkalai Acharya, Manavala Mamunigal, who mostly contributed to the popularization of the Alwars and their literal doctrines and so as is accorded a foremost place in South Indian Vaishnavite temples. The shrine dedicated to this great Acharya within the precincts of this temple has been in existence for a long time, at any rate from a date prior to 1555 A.D. (Vide S.I.T.I. 390 at page 373). It is the patram or Thaniyan or the special invocatory verse, viz, *Sri Sailasa Dayapatram* in honour of this Acharya that Tirumalai Thathacharyar guaranteed (in 1711) to honour not only in this temple and the other Seventeen Divyadesams of Kanchi, but also in his own private house and in his own Brethern as a condition precedent to the receipt of priority of honours in the temple.

Again, even in the faked Attan Jiyar agreement, already referred to page ante) it is made to appear by the Thathacharis that Tirumalai Thathacharyar undertook to construct a new(!) a shrine Manavala Mamunigal (as if there was shrine before!), in return for the great service rendered by Attan Jiyar in recovering the chief Idols from Udayarpalayam / yet it is this shrine of Manavala Mamunigal that the Thathacharis chose first to close, in 1852, and stopped all pujas and festivals for him, for which the Tenkalai custodians or the shrines had to file O. S. 120 of 1852. This suit, as well as its appeal Nos. 70 and 82 of 1856 ended in full favour of the Thenkalais in 1857, till which year the shrine remained closed. When the Court Amin attached the shrine



and broke open the doors (as they were refused to be opened by Thathachari trustees) for the purpose of handing over charge of the shrine and its belonging to the former Tenkalai Custodians on 2.12.1857, the Uthsavur copper idol (used for processions) was missing and the Moolavar (the immobile stone idol at the SANCTUM SANCTORUM presented a ghostly appearance! The Court Amin's report runs thus: "Main stone idol of Manavala Mamuni in question---hurt appearing on the said idol. 1 hurt below the Nose; hurt at the end of the Nose on the left side, 1 hurt in the right eye; 1 hurt on the fore head on the left side; 1 hurt on the left eye; 1 hurt in the said eyebrow; 1 hurt on the upper lip. The said hurts on inspectun appear to have been made newly. There is no copper idol of the said Manavala Mamunigal used for procession (Vide page 85 of the printed papers in O.S. 744 of 1897). No enemy would commit such a sin, and yet, the Thathacharis who came as friends, nay, as worshippers and venerators too of this great Acharya have allowed matters to run to such a horrible extent.

#### ADDED INSULT TO INJURY

Again when the Utsavar copper idol was recovered, after a vigorous search from a tank (Pottamarai) nearby, the Thathacharis contended that it was not the idol of the shrine, but only a new one manoeuvred into the tank surreptitiously by Tenkalais, and so, a suit again (O.S. 858 of 1861) had to be filed. This suit also ended in favour of the Tenkalais with the declaration, on expert evidence, that the idol was actually an old one enthroned in the shrine for centuries. Then the Thathacharis themselves filed a suit (O.S. 426 of 1872) that it was they who should be put in charge of the idol and the shrine as Dharmakarthas of the main temple! This claim was allowed, for obvious reasons, and only the right of general supervision of this shrine in common with the other sub-shrines of the temple was conceded to the trustees. But, how the Thathachari trustees exploited to its maximum limits, this right of general superintendence can be seen in the litigations that immediately followed both in the criminal and civil courts. The papers relating to these proceedings alone have gone into a bulky volume of printed matter. Every move and every inch of move the Tenkalais made by way of performing any festival, major or minor, to this great Acharya was resisted obstructed with their utmost power (Vide for instance, judgement in A.S. 367 of 1903 District Court Chingleput). The printed papers in respect of this matter alone consist of 247 pages of octvosize (Vide printed papers in O.S. 744 of 1897). Again, Tenkalais Custodians of this shrine had to recover through Court only and by Court execution only even the daily allowances to be paid for the shrine from the funds of the main temple.

#### THE THATHACHARIS AND NAMMALWAR

In respect of Nammalwar shrine in the temple the behaviour of the Thathachari Trustees was equally hostile and adamant. In the same year in which the shrine of Manavala Mamunigal was closed, this shrine was also shut up because it was in the custody of Tenkalais and O.S. 125 of 1852, had to be filed. This suit as well as its appeals ended in full favour of the Tenkalais. During execution proceedings which ensued for handing over possession of the shrine and its idols, viz., of Nammalwar, Madurakavigal and Sreeman Nathamunigal to the Tenkalais, all conceivable objections and obstructions were raised and offered. Para 37 of the judgement in a subsequent case (O.S. Nos 6 and 7 of 1912 P.D.M. Court, Chingleput) which were suit again filed for the same reliefs as involved in O.S. 125 of 1852, (an instance of how the Thathacharis would drive the Tenkalais to Courts again and again in respect of one and the same matter already settled by a judicial decision) run thus,

"First of all the Court issued a warrant for the opening of the Nammalwar shrine and attachment of the articles contained therein. Among the articles so ordered to be attached were the very idols kept inside the shrine. There upon, the trustees (Thathacharis) filed an objection petition stating that the plaintiffs (Tenkalais) obtained a decree only for Archaka Parcharaka Miras and that therefore the idols should not be attached. In disallowing this objection the Court of Conjeevaram Taluk Munsiff stated that what was meant by the attachment of the idols was that they were to be handed over by the defendants (the Thathachari Trustees) to the plaintiffs (Tenkalai custodians) so as to enable the latter to perform Pooja, etc., for them (Exhibit F). There after the idols of the shrine, the keys thereof, and the various other articles, enumerated in (Exhibit E) were all duly attached".

#### A SAMPLE OF THE THATHACHARIS' INTRANSIGENCE

The defendants once again contended that the plaintiffs had not obtained any decree for the physical custody of the idols and keys of the Nammalwar shrine and that they should not be given actual custody of the same. The Court of the Conjeevaram Taluk Munsiff thereupon passed a long and eloquent order (Exhibit G) disallowing the defendants' contentions and ordering the delivery of the keys and idols in the custody of the plaintiffs. Portions of the order are worth quoting :



"Plaintiffs have obtained both in the trial and the appellate Courts in respect of the Archaka and Paricharaka rights in the shrine.....Now, as in the absence of the idols, no Pooja can be performed, their attachment is quite proper.....Again if the keys of the shrine in which the idols are kept are not with the plaintiffs, it would be impossible for them to do pooja for them or to clean the vessels and other articles kept within the shrine. So the keys must be in the possession of the customary Poojaries.....If a man possessing a right to perform certain acts on a particular object, is to perform such acts on such object it is necessary that he should be in possession of that object. For instance, for a painter to paint, he must have a wall to write upon.....For these reasons the idols in question have been properly attached and I hold that the keys of the shrine in which they exist should be handed over to the Plaintiffs.".....This is but only one instance of the Thathacharis Cantankerous attitude in respect of every suit which went against them.

#### AN ACID TEST OF NAMMALWAR

A very violent attempt at conversion of the Nammalwar shrine was made by the Thathacharis in 1903. On the 27th December of the year, the outer gates of the temple stood closed to the public as an elephant in the temple was made. Availing this opportunity the Thathacharis wrung forcibly the keys of the Nammalwar shrine from an aged Tenkalai Archaka who was doing Puja inside, and after gagging his mouth, stole away the idols of the Nammalwar, Madurakavi and Sreeman Nathammunigal to a secluded room up in the temple terrace, known as the Hill, to alter the namams from Tenkalai to Vadakalai character with the aid of Nitric acid. But the brilliant golden face, of the idols stood beautifully acid proof and asserted the truth of the pristine Tenkalai character, amidst lively scenes of inspection and investigation by the local authorities incharge of law and order. For the police and the magistracy rushed immediately to the spot. The Vadagalai miscreants, two Thathacharis were caught red handed and convicted (C.C. 31 of 1909) and the shrine was kept under police guard for some time. The Thathacharis, again, resisted handing over charge of the shrine to the Tenkalais and the performance of Pooja by the Tenkalais Archakas under cover of their general right of management. It is this that resulted in the suits, O.S. Nos. 6 and 7 of 1912, and A.S. No. 36 of 160 of 1917 (H.C.). It need not be said that the Tenkalais succeeded uniformly in all the Courts. the main ground for the decision being *Resjudicare*, as the parties, their claims and counter claims were identical with those in the early suit (O.S. 125 of 1852) It is one of the ways of the

Thathacharis to interpret a judgement as in their favour, however, clearly and explicitly the findings in a judgement and the terms of a decree might have been expressed against them and to invent "fresh ingenious ways" to drag on the litigations endlessly.

#### THE PARADOX OF THE FIRST SCHEME

The term "Paradox of Hedonism" should be familiar to students of Ethics. That is, too much indulgence in any carnal pursuit proves to be itself suicidal! This is what has happened in the case of the Managements of this temple by the Thathacharis. The fact is, that it was not on the move, first, of the Tenkalais for the great and grave acts of injustice committed by the Thathacharis against them and against the ancient Tenkalai Character of the Temple that the first Scheme, reported in 23 M.L.J. (134), came into being. Action in this respect was first taken by a few among the Thathacharis themselves who were unable to bear the great acts of crime committed by their brethren against Lord Varadaraja! It is the Thathacharis who first filed O.S. No. 11 of 1907 for scheme in the District Court, Chingleput, and the plaint would reveal how the Trustees were acting without any kind of restraint or scruple whatsoever. Apart from the charges of many acts by way of non-feasance and misfeasance, the non-maintenance of regular accounts and the suppression of very little accounts, the non-submission to Audit and the non-payment of wages and shop dues for long periods there were grave charges of misappropriation and self-appropriation of large temple funds. The whole Administration was running amuck. It could not have been otherwise in the hands of those who were drunk mad with sectarian fanaticism. The diversion of large temple funds for sectarian disputes and litigations led to the stoppage of a great number of important festivals and even the day-to-day pooja threatened to come to a stand-still and the temple itself would have been closed had not a philanthropic gentleman, by name Thonangulam Ramanujachariar, came to the rescue (vide para 18 viii of the Plaint in O.S. 11 of 1907 Dt. Court, Chingleput). Matters went to such a head that the Thathachari trustees themselves had to admit the necessity for a scheme, but as the one first framed by the District Court was satisfactory to no Party, the case went up to the High Court in A.S. 212 of 1909.

#### THE TENKALAI CAUSE BUT TAGGED IN THE APPEAL

In the meanwhile, the Tenkalais also filed this suit for scheme (O.S. No. 27 of 1903) after obtaining sanction therefor from the Collector of Chingleput, whose order runs thus :-

"There appears good ground for believing that serious irregularities have



taken place and that the Thathachari have managed the temple for THEIR OWN PLEASURE AND PROFIT INSTEAD OF FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC. Sanction required under Section 539 of the Civil Procedure Code is granted" (Signed) P.A. Booty Acting Collector 25.9.03".

But unfortunately, the scheme suit (O.S. 27 of 08) filed by the Tenkalais in the Dist. Court, Chingleput could not be pursued, as the suit (O.S. 11 of 07) was pending disposal (as A.S. 212 of 09) in the High Court, and the Tenkalais were permitted to join as parties in the appeal itself. Therefore, the Tenkalais had no opportunity to present their own case in the High Court as fully and exhaustively as they could have done in a trial court exposing all the vagaries of the Thathacharis and the great acts of crime committed from Father to Son and Grandson under the cover of a (questionable) hereditary title which was ultimately found against by the High Court. Moreover, in this first scheme suit, the Hon. Judges of the High Court were already satisfied that the scheme framed by the District Court was not at all satisfactory and were determined to frame their own, by providing for a BOARD OF SUPERVISION consisting of a Tenkalai gentleman, a non-thathachari Vadagalai gentleman, and a Smartha or Madhwa gentleman, under whose control and directions, five Thathachari Trustees were to administer the affairs of the Temple. Therefore, the Tenkalais had neither the opportunity nor scope to press the matter further and state their full case. The Hon'ble Judges, the Advocates and all the parties concerned thought, at that time, that the remedy provided for by the High Court would act as a panacea for all the ills. It was hoped that the Thathachari trustees would respect and honour the order of the Board of Supervision as decrees of the Privy Council!!!!

#### FIRST SCHEME—"AN UNQUALIFIED FAILURE"

But Mr. P.N. Ramaswamy (afterwards Hon'ble Mr. Justice P. N. Ramaswamy) while referring to this scheme in his judgement in O.P. 8 of 1940 in the District Court Chingleput says (para 21) "The Scheme framed by the High Court with such full patience and labour has unfortunately proved to be an unqualified failure———The Scheme had to be worked not by reasonable people, in a spirit of compromise put by VETERAN LITIGANTS, consistently described by all persons who have had to decide these matters as being inspired by Sectarian rivalry and animosity—and to whom EVERY JUDGEMENT OF THE DISTRICT COURT HAS BEEN ONLY A FURLONG STONE AND EVERY JUDGEMENT OF THE HIGH COURT HAS BEEN ONLY A MILESTONE IN THE LONG ROAD OF LITIGATION THE END OF WHICH NO ONE CAN SEE" But Mr. P.N. Ramaswamy as Dt. Judge

no doubt gave a graphic description of the disease, in his judgement in O.P. 8 of 1940, but he diagnosed it as chronic, for he found ultimately, that the trusteeship of the Thathacharis was hereditary and that the temple fell under the category of "expected temples" But this decision was immediately reversed by a Bench decision of the High Court in C.R.P. No 1355 of 1940 (1941-1. M.L.J. 250). It should be mentioned here that their Lordships who decided A.S. 212 of 1909 (23 M.L.J. 134) have themselves clearly stated in the judgement that the title of the Thathacharis to Trusteeship, if at all, is not an ancient one, but only got from Government in 1842! It is on the definite finding in C.R.P. No. 1355 of 1940 that the Thathacharis are not hereditary trustees that the second scheme was framed in A.S. No. 175 of 1934, and the Executive management of the temple was wrung from the hands of the Thathacharis and vested in neutral hands, that is of a Smartha or Madhwa Brahmin to be appointed by the H.R.E. Board direct. In order to avoid sudden change in the Administration, two Thathacharis were retained as honorary trustees but to function only in an advisory capacity.

#### THE THATHACHARIS BE NUMBED FOR A DECADE

The second scheme framed by the High Court in A.S. No. 175 of 1934 did really produce the real effect as the Thathacharis got non-plussed with the rich Purse of the temple wrung out of their pockets. They got benumbed and did not recover from the shock for nearly ten years. This period is really a golden age in the Modern history of the temple, as, not only the resources of the temple got improved and consolidated for the temple's own benefit, but the prestige of the Alvars also got revived with the service of Adyapakam rendered unhindered. This period was one of respite from the usual Sectarian litigations also and the consequent recurrence of the breach of public peace. The festivals of the Alvars and Acharyas including those of Manavala Mamunigal were revived and performed in their good old grand scale after being suspended for nearly a century. Even though there were a few feeble attempts against such revival, the Executive Trustees who were appointed in the first decade, and the members of the H.R.E. Board warded them off with an iron will and a stem hand. But unfortunately, this state could not continue long as the Thathacharis woke up soon from their swoon and began to assert once again, exploiting to the maximum, the very little power and privilege reserved to them as honorary trustees within the frame-work of the second scheme and embodied in rule 66 etc., framed by the H.R.E. Board.



## THE SET-BACK

The set-back commenced in about 1950 and the target of attack has been, mainly, as can be expected, once again the Adyapakam service only against which the Thathacharis have been contending consistently and tenaciously but unsuccessfully almost from the beginnings of the last century, and for which alone they first conceived their Swathantra Dittam forgery. Among the rights they originally arrogated to themselves in this Dittam (vide page 215 in O.S. 10 of 06 print book) not a word is mentioned about Kattiyam or Stotrapatam or Mantra-puspham mirsis as belonging to them. It is only laterly they managed to establish their title to these Mirasu offices but to a limited extent. Now, that is, after the second scheme, as Thathacharis are at once the honorary trustees with still same shadow of Power left in their hands (by way of voting for budget etc.) and the Mirasdars also for these three offices, they attempted to make capital use of their position as such, by converting these small offices as strongholds of invasion and attack against the Tenkalai Adyapakam service

## AN IMPERTINENT INGENUITY NIPPED

Among the festivals revived after the second scheme, there is none so important, more so pious and none so grand as the Adyayana Utsavam already referred to as the *sine-quo-non* of every Vaishnavite temple. The later ten days of the festival, known as the 'Irapatthu Uthsavam are devoted only to the recital of the thousand odd sublime songs far famed as the TIRUVOIMOZHI of Nammalwar, who is the Chief among the canonised Vaishnavate saints. On the 10th day and at the finishing stage of the recital which marks the culmination of the festival, the image of Nammalwar is lifted and slowly taken with due honours to the feet of the Chief Deity with the recital of the last twenty stanzas of Tiruvoimozhi which gives a graphic description as to how an enlightened and released soul transcends early bondage and reaches Heaven, being welcomed all along on the way by heavenly spirits, who take him on and on to the immediate presence of the Almighty, to be united with Him in the eternal bliss of Heaven. After being one with the Almighty for some time, the Alwar is re-granted to the world at the request of earthly devotees for the redemption of mankind at large. Then the Alwar is allowed to return to his earthly throne, and is taken back and placed in his original seat as a Central figure among the other Alwars. This is a sight to see in Vaishnavite temples and no Vaishnava living in the neighbourhood, will miss this thrilling function. In 1949, it was such a solemn occasion as this that was chosen by the Thathacharis to be disturbed and spoiled, under care of the Kattiyam Mirasi, by causing the Gumastha appointed for it, to shout at the top of his voice, in conjunction with a few fanatic Vadagalais. Certain

irrelevant Sanskrit slokams in such a way as to literally jam and suppress the recital of the last stanzas of Tiruvaimozhi. This naturally, led to a serious class and disturbance of the peace and the festival ended in a fiasco. The next year the police were vigilant and prevented a recurrence of the nasty scene. No law courts are required to pronounce a judgement in this matter! The Executive Trustee, one Mr. Madhawa Rao narrowly escaped action by the Police for allowing such a disturbance on such a solemn and serene occasion. From the next year onwards, the executive trustees in their own interest, have been issuing orders to the Kattiyamdar to keep strictly within his limits and not to spoil such a grand festival at its end.

## THE MANGALASASANAM TWIST

In O.S. 24 of 1902, the Stotrapatam case, reported in 20 M.L.J. (530) the Thathacharis claimed twelve occasions for reciting sanskrit verses. It has been already mentioned that they attempted to convert this service as a clog or counterchant against the time honoured Tamil Adyapakam service, as one of their methods of converting the temple from Tenkalai to Vadakalai character. The District Court allowed only nine occasions for them, and the High Court cut down to only six rare occasions. The last of such occasions is what is called for MANGALASASANAM of Vilakkoli Vedantha Desikar, when his idol is taken from his shrine in the birth place (Avathara Sihalam) to and inside Sri Varadaraja Swami temple for worship. Now, the Thathacharis claim Vedantha Desikar as a solely Vadagalai Acharya. They wanted to have this festival as a purely Vadagalai festival with sanskrit recitations alone prevailing throughout inside a temple in which they were the sole trustees. We have already shown that their prejudice against Tamil has become a pretty well-legally established fact too (1947-1 M.L.J. (P.C.) 159 and 83 L.W. 407). In conformity with this the Thathacharis have sought to stop the recitation of the Tamil Divya Prabandams, on this occasion, inside the temple and have obtained also an injunction therefor. It should be pointed out here that it is on account of their prejudice against Tamil and their sinister motives in the matter, that the Vadagalais have been prohibited from reciting any Tamil of their own in connection with temple worship, independent of the Tenkalai Mirasdars, lest they should invade against and do away with the really time honoured Tamil chants of the Alwars by introducing innovations. Now, the Thathacharis are honorary trustees. They are also the mirasdars for the Stotrapatam service in the temple. In 1947, a fugitive attempt to recite tamil i.e., a few stanzas from the so-called Desika Prabandam, by a Vadakalai on this Mangalasasanam occasion near the Chief Deity is noted in the Diary of the Executive Trustee with doubt raised against its propriety or legality. In 1952 two Thathacharis recited Tamil (Desika Prabandam) on the occasion and the complaint of the Tenkalais there against was over ruled. As the Tenkalai feared repetition of such infringements with the connivance of the Executive Trustee they took action



in the H.R. & C.E. Department which directed the Vadagalais to establish their claim in this respect, if any, by a regular petition under Sec. 57-c of the H.R. & C.E. Act. Thereupon, the Vadagalais filed their petition O.A. No. 162 of 1955. Both the Dy. Commissioner and the Commissioner after a full fledged enquiry dismissed their claim as new and unproved. Thereafter, a regular suit O.S. 30 of 1956 is filed by the Vadagalais in the Sub Court, Chingleput, claiming that the Miras of the Thathacharis for the Stothrapatam chant is inclusive of the chant of Tamil Prabandams (!) and the Thathacharis and the other Vadagalais also in combination with them can chant Tamil Desika Prabandam throughout the Mangalasasanam occasion! After hanging in the sub court of Chingleput for full six years, the suit is dismissed with costs on 10.8.1962. But this is not the end, as the High Court has to settle the matter, as in all other matters, once for all. The appeal filed by the Vadagalais (A.S. 283 of 1963) is also dismissed with costs on 24.3.1969. Their Lordships Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ramamurthy and Mr. Justice Palaniswamy have observed in the course of their judgement (vide para 34) that the claim of the Vadagalais:

"that the Tamil songs composed by Sri Desikan are also Stotrams or slogams and by the reason of the adjudication in the Stothrapatam case—the Plaintiff and the other vadakalais are entitled to recite the Tamil Composition of Sri Vedantha Desikar appears to be a disingenuous attempt. In the Stothrapatam case, the Thathacharis made it explicitly clear in the Plaint (Exhibit A6) that the Stothrapatam Miras Office means the recitation of *Sanskrit* Stotrams" and further their Lordship state that "It would be doing violence to the meaning of the word 'Stotram' if one were to say that it includes Tamil compositions also". They have also stated earlier (vide para 21) "There is no proof that during the lifetime of Shri Vedantha Desikar that he himself recited any of his compositions in Tamil at the time of his birthday, when he offered worship before Sri Devarajaswamy". They have no doubt that the entire case of the Plaintiff is built upon an unfounded edifice". This is the fate which the claim for reciting Desika Prabandam in this temple even for a few minutes and even by a single Vadakalai individual met with in the High Court in quite recent years. It should be mentioned here that, even though the Thathachariar did not figure directly as petitioners or Plaintiffs in this case for obvious reasons it became evident that it was they who were the play-back actors throughout in this litigation. But as we will be reverting to the subject of Desika Prabandam in a later section, we shall pass on to a net ingenious and violent attempt of the Thathacharis, by way of invading against the Adyapakam Miras of the Tenkalais, but which has been ultimately frustrated."

#### A MOUNTAIN OF A MOLE-HILL

Towards the close of the last century, the Thathacharis have established

their right to the Office of Mantrapushpam in a suit (O.S. 9 of 1899 Dt. Court, Chingleput) against Archakas of the temple in which the Tenkalais were not at all parties. This service is part and parcel of Thiruvadanam (Pooja) performed by Archaka or Poojarl a daily routine and individually by a Mira dar in every temple. It is at best a supplement to the Archakas office to make it more pious, serene and effective and in no temple performed as a congregational service or in any ostentatious manner. As the Thathacharis and other Vadagalai failed to establish their claim in respect of the Adyapakam matter consistently in all the cases of which the latest is the one reported in 1939-1 M.L.J.(124) which rendered the Adyapakam service of the Tenkalais free from the imposition of any kind of restriction by the Vadagalais as to time, place, manner, condition etc., they conceived a novel and ingenious way of invading and attacking this time honoured service from within the narrow limits of the Thathacharis Mantra Pushpam office. They converted it into a big congregational affair consisting of a large body of Thathacharis and other Vadakalais who shouted at the top of their voices not only the usual Sanskrit text- but also some prohibited Tamil Pasurams and some controversial sanskrit stotrams in such away as to actually join, obstruct and spoil the recitation of the Divya Prabandams by the Tenkalai Mirasdars a few paces apart. The Thathacharis dared not adopt this method as long as the Executive Trustees were strong. Their mischief in the line began to lift its head only from the beginning of the second decade after the second scheme into force. Therefore, the Tenkalais had to face a series of long-drawn litigations both in the Endowment Department and in regular law Courts. The Tenkalais first took action before the Dy. Commissioner, H.R.C. & E. Dept. in 1954 by filing a petition (O.A. No. 204 of 54) after some preliminary ordeals in the temple trust Board. The Dy. Commissioner, first dismissed the application of the Tenkalais on technical grounds, but the Commissioner on revision remanded the case for enquiry on merits, by the Dy. Commissioner himself. On this, the Thathachari, Honorary Trustees filed a writ petition (W P. 242 of 1956) for quashing the Commissioner's orders of remand. After an elaborate enquiry, the writ petition was dismissed by the High Court. The Thathacharis again filed a writ appeal which was also dismissed in 1958—The case O.A. No. 242 of 1954 thus came up for disposal on merits before the Deputy Commissioner. After an elaborate enquiry, the Deputy Commissioner upheld almost all the contentions of the Tenkalais by his order dt 8.3.1961. Thereupon, the Thathacharis filed an appeal to the Commissioner which came up for enquiry before the Principal Subordinate Judge, Chingleput, as the very Deputy Commissioner who decided the matter was immediately promoted as the Commissioner himself. The Principal Subordinate Judge, after an elaborate enquiry again, dismissed the appeal on 28.9.1967 and upheld the order of the Deputy Commissioner in all respects. Thereupon, the Thathacharis filed



a regular suit (O.S. 35 of 1968) in the Sub Court itself as provided for in the H.R.C. & B Act. The Tenkalais filed a long written statement in this suit exposing all the vagaries of the Thathacharis in this respect and questioning the very basis of their right to Mantrapushpam in the temple. The Thathacharis got terribly afraid and thought prudent to withdraw the suit and filed an application therefor on 24.12.1970 and the suit was dismissed as withdrawn on the same date. If they had only pursued their game to the end, as in the case of Desikar Mangalasasanam matter, surely, they would have met their last ditch in the temple, as the sandy sheet anchor of all their rights in the temple (The forged Swathanthra Dittam) and all the later fabrications were waiting ready to confront them during the trial! But their last ditch was awaiting them in another field. And, in respect of this Mantrapushpam matter we leave it to our readers to gauge the enormous loss of time, energy and money incurred by the Tenkalais who were dragged from Court to Court including the High Court twice, during this long period of two decades to ward off a simple but blatant and barefaced mischief which could have been easily nipped in the bud if only the Exe. Trustee had been strict in the beginning without playing as a puppet in the hands of the Thathacharis.

#### THE THATHACHARIS AND THE ELEPHANT

We have already made it clear that this temple had been originally Tenkalai only in totality and has continued to be as such only till the Thathacharis came to dominate as Trustees. Quite in accordance with this general character, the living elephant of the temple also have, of course, continued to the Tenkalai only till 1850. The elephants have figured as an item in the list of Narahari Rayer dt. 17.1.1823 subscribed to and signed by Kumara Thathachariar (Ex. A1 in the recent elephant case) and also in the report of Ramaswamy Maistry dt. 3.8.1827 which was immediately verified to be true by the then Collector Mr. Henry Vivash by his personal inspection (Page 158 to 160 of Exhibit A-12). In the 1850 Namam Suit the namam of the living elephant figured as one of the items first converted and therefore claimed to be restored and decreed accordingly. Regarding the atrocities committed by the Thathacharis in this respect, we have only to quote the following portions from the Judgement itself of the trial Court, in the recent elephant case (O.S. 408 of 1966 P.D.M. Court), Chingleput.

"The plea of defendants 2 and 3 (The Thathachari Honorary Trustees) that the living elephant in the suit temple was never painted with Tenkalai Namam is a DELIBERATE incorrect plea" (Para 27).

"The Trustees of the temple did not obey the decree in A.S. 13 and 14 of 1854 on the file of the Civil Judge, Chingleput. After L.R.s to the defendants

in O.S. 14 of 1850 were added after some execution proceedings, Chengalvaraya Naicker was appointed Amin to restore the Tenkalai Namam on the living elephant etc. He was given a *Hukum Nama* directing him to take police help and attach the living elephant, Yalivahanam etc., belonging to the suit temple and affix or paint with Thenkalai Namam after erasing the existing Vadagalai namam. (vide page 162 to 170 in Ex. A.12). The Amin sent a report stating that he painted the Elephant with Tenkalai Namam but the defendant's Dharmakarthas left the same behind and did not use it in the Utsavam conducted. They also RESISTED THE AMIN from executing the other portion of his work. A fresh warrant was issued subsequently overruling the objection of the Trustees. The Court Amin Chengalvaraya Naicker and Court peons Ponnappa and Narayanaswamy Naicker brought the Hukum Nama issued by the Court on the 10th April 1858 directing to carry out the directions of the Appeal decree passed on 30th June 1856 in A.S. Nos. 13 and 14 of 1854. They attached the living elephant on 19th April 1858 belonging to the God. The Tenkalai namam one foot in length 3/4 foot in breadth was painted on the forehead of the living elephant with the help of a painter. On 26.1.1858, a proclamation was issued by the Court of Civil Judge, Chingleput that none should interfere with the Thenkalai Namam painted on the elephant in the suit temple. Ex A6 extract from the proceedings of the Civil Court, Chingleput dt 25th September, 1858, shows that the plaintiff in O.S. 14 of 1850 had to take proceedings to punish the defendants for disobedience of the decree. It was alleged that the DEFENDANTS put Vadakalai namams on papers and affixed the same to the cloth and tied it to the Pandal in the Gangaikondan Mandapam to conceal the Tenkalai Namam put there in pursuance of the decree. The defendants also were said to have directed the "Mahout" not to put Tenkalai Namam on the elephant when the elephant was given bath. In M.P. 24/1858, the Court imposed a fine of Rs. 50/- on the defendants in that suit for contempt of Court for disobeying its order. In Ex. B 18 it was averred that the decree in A.S. Nos. 2, 13 & 14 of 1854 was executed and the Thenkalai Namam was put on the forehead of the elephant, but the Trustees painted Vadakalai Namam on cloth and placed it on the elephant (Para 37)". In general, the conduct of the Trustees and the servants in painting the living elephant with Vadagalai namam was clandestine.....". The trustees cannot be allowed to take advantage of their own BREACH OF TRUST (Para 39). THE DEFENDANTS DEFINITELY COMMITTED BREACH OF TRUST in refusing to paint the living elephant with Thenkalai Namam and painting it with Vadakalai Namam (Para 60). The defendants wantonly and deliberately refused to receive the elephant from the Tenkalais and having been fully aware of the entire history of the namam on the living elephant in the suit temple (Ex. A.13 to 16) and this suit, then accepted an elephant from a Vadakalai during the pendency of the suit. They deserve no equity or sympathy (Para 37) "We find it obligatory to grant



the injunctions prayed for by the Plaintiffs. It is the right of the Tenkalais, if fact the right of all Hindus, in general that the age-old customary practice on painting the living elephant in the suit of temple with Tenkalai Namam should be continued ....It is the duty of the wardens of the temple, whether they belong to the Vadakalai Sect or Tenkalai Sect that they are non-sectarians to obey the decree in A.S. 13 of 1854 and zealously guard the age-old practice of maintaining the living elephant with Tenkalai Namam, when the defendants whose duty it is to maintain the elephant with Tenkalai Namam *commit breach of trust* and fail to do their duties it is obligatory on the part of the Court to make them do their duties by mandatory and preventive injunction. Granting injunction would not inflict any hardship upon the defendants or SRI ANDAVAN SWAMI who is alleged to have donated the elephant with full knowledge about the history. On the other hand, it would only help the defendants to perform their functions in the most just and equitable way!" Friends it is against this judgement, consisting of not less than fifty pages of print matter, and from which we have quoted but a bare minimum, that the Thathachari honorary trustees failed an appeal (A.S. 103 of 1970) and a further appeal (S.A. 98 of 1973) and a still further appeal (L.A.P. 45 of 1974) but have uniformly failed. In the course of the trial, and during the hearing of the appeals, they have engaged best counsels available (including the Advocate-General), and as in their case in every case, all technical contentions conceivable in law have been raised, such as under the heads, jurisdiction, maintainability, court fee, cause of action, limitation, adverse position, estoppals, Res judicata, Acquiescence, laches non-joinder and equity itself not excepted since their cause has been always hopeless on facts! But Lord Varadaraja of Satyavratha Kshetra (Lord of truth and justice) has asserted again and again and has proved to be really true to his sincere devotees, as he has been doing in every other litigation in respect of this temple. And here, we are constrained to lay a challenge before the advocate author of the booklet under review who would madly maintain that this temple is cent percent Vadakalai, to pick out a single instance in which the Vadagalais succeeded in law Courts in course of their never-ending sectarian litigations going on for nearly two centuries. And what should be the true import of such a state in respect of the character of the temple. We leave it to the advocate himself to draw it.

One should be familiar with the proverb "The will of God grinds slow but sure" and we shall see how hot it has been grinding in the case of Thathacharis. We beg pardon for a repetition, of a passage we are quoting from the recent judgement of the High Court in L.P.A. 54 of 74 about the conduct of the Thathachari Trustees. Their Lordships, the Hon'ble Mr P.S. Kailasam, Chief Justice and the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Balasubramaniam have closed their judgement with the following remarks "we see sufficient basis in Mr. Venkatavarada

chari's (Advocate for Thenkalais) grievance that the trouble is mainly due to the unreasonable attitude of the Thathachari Trustees. It is sufficient to quote a passage from Srinivasachariar Vs Thathachariar (83 L.W. 407) in which the bench has quoted the remarks of Sadasiva Iyer J. in Thathachariar Vs Thiruvengkadachariar (915 M.W.N. 916):— "Mr. Venkatavaradachariar appearing for defendants 4 and 5 (Thenkalais) urged with some amount of justification that this attitude of, the Vadakalais in putting forwardsome innovation or other in one form or another from time to time has been responsible for the series of litigations pertaining to this temple going on for two centuries. In Thathachariar Vs Tiruvengkadachariar (1915 M.N.N. 916) Sadasiva Iyer J. had occasion to make some adverse remarks against the attitude of the Vadakalais where the learned Judge has pointed out that the litigation in that case was the result of a small, though influential faction of Vadagalai sectarians residing in Kancheepuram by introducing innovations in custody practices during the period of regular official worship in the Temple".

"We fully agree with the views expressed by the learned judges in both these decisions, it is unfortunate that, even though the remarks were made over sixty years ago, the Honorary Trustees do not seem to have realised the responsibilities. It is the ineffectiveness of the Executive Trustee and his playing in the hands of the Honorary Trustees that led to this deplorable litigation". Their Lordships have ended their judgment with the following observation and direction to the Government. "We find from this litigation that the Honorary Trustees have taken and were allowed to take undue and unhealthy interest in this litigation. The Honorary Trustees have taken a Partisan attitude which has interfered with the smooth functioning of this religion institution ... Sri Devarajaswamy Temple at Kancheepuram is one of the famous Vaishnavite temples like Tirupati and Srirangam. It is the bounden duty of the Government and the Endowment Boards to see that this famous Pilgrim centre of all India important functions without let or hindrance by a small influential faction of Vadakalai Vaishnavites. We hope that the Government and the Endowment Board will take immediate and adequate steps to see that a competent Executive Trustee is appointed to the temple for effectively administering the affairs of the temple and to safeguard the interest of the various sections of the devotees. It is the bounden duty of the Endowment Board and the Executive Trustee to see that this influential minority does not over-step their limits and disturb the peace and solemnity of the holy temple. A copy of the judgement would be sent to the Government for appropriate action. It is thus the appeal of the Thathacharis has been dismissed by the High Court with a cost of Rs. 1000/- to the Thenkalais. If such a verdict as this from the First Bench of the highest tribunal of the State does not prove to be their last ditch in the temple, we cannot see what else can do it.



## Section 4.

**HYSTERICAL CRIES:** Regarding the character of the temple the Advocate with his jaundiced eye, is stranded into wilderness. He says (at 4 and 5) that the presence of any Baktha Vighraha (idol) in a temple any laudation thereof by a devotee will not go to prove the character of a temple as belonging to the creed of such a Baktha or devotee. He asks whether the presence of a Bibi Nachiar in the Srirangam temple make it a mahamudan temple, or the existence of a cherakulavalli (Malayala Nachiar) in Kancheepuram temple make it a Keralite one? Thus he would place the Alvars in the same category as of a stray devotees! Even a child cannot appreciate such an argument. A rare exception will not by itself become a general law. An exception can only prove a general rule but cannot form it. It occurs in a very peculiar circumstance which is seldom repeated. He says that Varadarajaswamy Temple will not become a Saivite one because Appayya Dikshithar a staunch Saivite has sung Varadarajasthavam. It is true that Appayya Dikshithar has sung laudation but does the author know under what circumstances he has done it? He should have done it only to please his Royal Patron Rama Raya who was a staunch Vaishnavite or Rama Raya himself could have made him to do it in order to wean him away from his sectarian fanaticism. No doubt Kings, Emperors and even Ministers and Nobles have extended their equal patronage to institutes of various denominations, but they have done it to show themselves impartial and thereby to become popular. The Srirangam and Kancheepuram temples can get on with or without a Bibi Nachiar or a Cherakulavalli or without the laudation of Appayya Dikshithar, but it is not in the case of Divyadesams and Alvars.

## THE TENKALAI CAUSE BUT TAGGED IN THE APPEAL

We have already shown (at page...ante) that as far as the ancient Vaishnavite temples are concerned they have come down to us as Divya Desams or divine temples only because of the Alvars' songs about them. There can be no Divyadesam without Alvars and no Alvars without Divyadesams. These two are mutually dependant, the one entailing the other. If one of them is struck off, the other automatically goes. It is why, in Vaishnavite temples the performance of poojas and Festivals for Alvars, on a par with those of the Chief Deities has become an important and essential ingredient.

The Advocate says (at page.....) "It is an unsolved mystery as to how the followers of Agamas are allowed the installation of Bhakta Bimbasa in the temple" The word "mystery" here for mystery (not included in the errata)

would have been appropriate to indicate the mentality of the author if it is also stood with the letter 't' omitted! He can pose such problems as this before a staunch Advaitic Saivite like Appayya Dikshithar and his followers, but not as a Vaishnavite before a Vaishnavite, pertaining to follow the creed of Ramanuja! To conceive a Vaishnavite temple apart from the Alvars and Poorva Acharyas who were the true followers of Alvars will be like looking for the beauty of a rose flower stripped of its petals!

The author along with his ally Agnihotram, may assert that the association of Ramanuja with the Alvars, or with the Alwar cult or with the installation of their idols in temples is but based on legends like the Koil Olugus and the Guru Pramparaprabhavam written by later interested persons (vide page 17 of the booklet) and not at all warranted by Ramanujas own works like the Sri Bhasya. Then did the presence of the Alvars idols in temples, the chanting of Divyaprabandams in them as part and parcel of daily routine and the performance of the feasts and festivals in a scale even grander than those of the Chief Deities, did all these originate from a myth and continue as shadows in a dream? If not to Ramanuja, will these authors concede such a major reform to Manavala Mamunigal unquestionably the greatest exponent of the Alwar Cult and who is therefore invoked in all Divyadesams (except a very few recently converted) at the beginning of every Pooja or feast or festival?

When then, we are led to ask, do the purely Vadagalai temple also, built in recent times by the Vadagalais and solely for the Vadagalais copy the Tenkalai temples in this respect and install at least Nammalwar and Andal among the Alvars and Ramanuja and Desika among the Acharyas as a minimum requisite. While dealing with the issue regarding the Preominant Character of the temple, the learned Dt. Munsiff after referring to the contentions of the vadakalai Thathachari Honorary trustees in para 56 of the judgement observes thus (in para 57) the consideration of these things makes one feel that probably the temple is predominantly Vadakalai in character as it stands today. But when we consider the divergence between the Tenkalai and the Vadakalai as laid down in 1947-1-M.L.J Privy Council—page 159 and see whether the distinctive feature of the Tenkalai or Vadakalai is in vogue in the suit temple, we are inclined to feel that the impression that the suit temple is predominantly in character is illusive. As rightly pointed out by the Vadagalai Plaintiff's, it is not the number of Namams somehow introduced by the Vadakalai trustees or the influence which the Vadakalai trustee exercises that go to determine the distinctive character of the institution. The differences between the Vadakalai, and Tenkalai sects are given in A.I.R. 1947. 1-M.L.J. referred to para 13 above. We find the Tenkalai form of worship is followed in the suit temple from time immemorial. We find the invocation of the PATRAM saint MANAVALA MAHAMUNI. The service begins by the word "SRI SAILESA DAYAPAT-



RAM" and not RAMANUJA DAYAPATRAM. The document the Attan Jiyar Agreement of 1711 Page 174 of Ex. A. 12 in the case) shows that the Tenkalai Mantram was in vogue in the suit temples from time immemorial even in 1711. Hence, when we consider these thing it appears that the temple is predominately Thenkalai in character even though it is dominated by Vadakalai Trustees in the Administration of the affairs of the temple.

We have already seen how the Thenkalais have had to contend against Himalayan odds to maintain the pristine Thenkalai character of the temple. In 5 Madras (313) it was affirmed that it is only the Thenkalai Mantram of Sri Sailesa Daya Patram that should prevail in the temple and that the Thenkalai residents of Kanchipuram have the exclusive miras for the Adyapakam service and are entitled to recite the Tamil Prabandas ON ALL OCCASIONS OF PUJAS AND FESTICALS after invoking their Guru Manavalamamunigal. By the same judgement the Vadagalais are also prohibited by means of a perpetual injunction from introducing their Vadakalai Thaniyan "RAMANUJA DAYA PATRAM" at any time or in any place in the service of the temple. In 1939 1-M.L.J 124, the right of the Thenkalais to recite their Vazhi Thirunamam with "மணவாள மாமுனியே இன்னும் ஒரு நூற்றாண்டிற்கும்" was reaffirmed and established beyond doubts. In 83 L.W. 407 all doubts in the matter were cleared so that as the position stands now, the Vadagalais either in congregation, or as a single individual cannot introduce their Vadakalai Thaniyan in any part of the temple and at any time. So what should be the character of the temple now according to the dictum of the Privy Council? Can there be any doubt, that it should be not only exclusively Thenkalai but also definitely, not Vadakalai! The author himself is constrained to admit (at page 6) Sri Vaishnavism has been connected with the temples invariably because its principles inspire devotion to the Gods of the temples." But he cannot see who except the Alwars can inspire devotion to the Gods of the temple and who except the true and faithful followers of the Alwars are competent to maintain and manage the temples as inspirers of devotion. We have seen enough of the management of the Kancheepuram temple by the Thathacharis and this would furnish a typical example as to who are competent and who are not.

